OBSERVATIONS

ON THE DISPATCH

WRITTEN THE 16th. JANUARY 1797,

By Mr. PICKERING, Secratary of State of the United States of America,

To Mr. PINKNEY, Miniſter Plenipotentiary of the United Sates near the French Republic.

BY C. C. TANGUY DE LA BOISSIÈRE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY SAMUEL CHANDLER.

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of the truths which ſhall appear to me neceſſary to complete it.

I might, without deviating from my plan, begin by expreſſing my ſurprize that the long diplomatic letter which paints France in ſuch black colours and reproaches her ſo bitterly, ſhould be rendered public. I know they will ſay it was not publiſhed by the American Government. That the Preſident wiſhing to communicate to Congreſs all the particulars of this intereſting affair, thought it his duty to make known whatever related to it; and that Mr. Pinkney's inſtructions being conſidered in that light (for this letter can be conſidered only as inſtructions) he conceives they formed a part of this communication; of which they really do form the baſis; ſo they have been printed by order of the two Houſes. But I would then aſk, why in the diſcuſſions which took place not long ago with England, and in ſimilar circumſtances the ſame meaſures were not taken? Why was it not thought neceſſary to have entire communications granted to Congreſs in the affair of the treaty with England which, muſt undoubtedly, have concerned the intereſts of the American people. This difference in the proceedings, reſults from the total difference in the diſpoſition of the government of the United States towards the two Nations. I think this diſpoſition towards France, blamable unjuſt and unreaſonable; I conceive the expreſſion of it contrary to all

wiſdom, policy, and poſſible way of negociation, and to the dignity as well as intereſt of the nation which diſcovers it; but ſince this diſpoſition has occaſioned a publication, which makes known the arguments of the American Council, thoſe who wiſh to know the ſolidity of it, cannot complain of its effects.

The three principal objects of the French Miniſter's complaint againſt the United States, ſays Miniſter Pickering are: 1ſt. *The abandonment of their neutral rights, in not maintaining the pretended principles of the modern law of nations (that free ſhips make free goods) and that timber and naval ſtores for the equipment and armament of veſſels are not contreband of war.*

2*dly*. *The violation of our treaties with France even in the letter.*

3*dly*. *The treaty of amity and commerce between the United States and Great Britain; which he alledges deprives France of all the advantages ſtipulated in the previous treaty. Finally the injuries that the allies of France muſt ſuffer from the alledged abandonment of the rules of the modern law of nations, on the part of America.*

Mr. Pickering pretends to prove that the complaints are without foundation; and argues with reſpect to the firſt that by the antient laws of nations *enemy's property* had ever been taken *under neutral colours*. That France and the United States in their treaty of 1778, have renounced theſe

antient principles, and consequently France ought to have weighed the consequences.

That England in the late treaty of 1795, has refused to renounce this antient law ; but she has acquired nothing in this respect by the treaty, since even before it was made, she followed the same principle, and was determined not to renounce it. Mr. Pickering makes use of the same arguments with respect to flour, naval stores for the use of the vessels, which England ranked in the number of contraband articles ; he adds that England being obliged to indemnify the Americans for the contraband articles, taken in their vessels, and which would be their property, it is more an encouragement than an obstacle to the merchants of this nation to risk sending to France even contraband articles.

Mr. Pickering supports these arguments, by quotations from Wattel, Valin and divers examples in the treaties of Russia, Sweden, Denmark &c. where the nature of contraband articles has varied according to the interests aud agreement of the contractors.

Before I follow Mr. Pickering in all his arguments, it becomes me to aknowledge it, as an inconteſtable truth, that the United Srates being an independant power, have the right of treating with every other nation, of comprehending in their treaties, whatever agreements they please. This privilege, is the immediate effects of their inde-

pendance, and France has aſſiſted too much in this independance to be reaſonably ſuſpected of diſſolving it. This declaration will, I hope, ſufficiently excuſe me from following Mr. Pickering in his quotations from Vattel, Valin &c. which are no direct authority and even were it otherwiſe, would ſuit the chicanry of the bar, much better, than the loyalty with which two great nations ought to treat together, whether to ſupport and form alliances or to break them. But the United States, as independent as any other nations, have the ſame injunction as any other, to be faithful to the contracts they have made and the intention which dictated the contract.

Confiding in theſe truths, I return to the diſcuſſion of Mr. Pickering's anſwer to the firſt object of complaint contained in the French Miniſter's note.

The ſeventeenth article of the treaty of amity and commerce between England and the United States which pronounces that merchandizes carried under neutral colours, ſhould not be leſs liable to capture, if they are the enemy's property, is a direct attack on the French commerce, ſince it delivers French property ſailing under American colours, to Engliſh veſſels which chooſe to capture them, whilſt the treaty of Verſailles, containing an article of a contrary nature, ſecures Engliſh property carried in American veſſels. Can this difference made by the United States between

the intereſts of the French and Engliſh nations, appear to any one, as a continuance of amity and alliance which dictated the treaty between America and France? This article becomes as offenſive as injurious to France, when ſhe conſiders that no other treaty made by the United States, contains this ſame clauſe. In vain does Miniſter Pickering alledge in his laſt anſwer to Mr. Pinkney that France in the fulfilment of her treaty ought to have weighed the force and intention of the agreement by which ſhe has conſented to acknowledge the merchandize carried in neutral veſſels, free. Could the French Miniſtry, at the time of the treaty, foreſee, 1°. that this convention full of juſtice and reaſon, that this truth of one general intereſt, ſo proper for lightning the misfortunes of war, or at leaſt to make them fall only on the belligerent powers, and ſo important to nations, whoſe commerce is their principal force and reſource, ſhould ever be abandonned by the United States. 2°. That it ſhould be done by them in a treaty of amity and commerce with England, then at war with France? It is a common caſe that our foreſeeing wiſdom in human tranſactions, even the beſt reflected, prove erroneous, but ſuch precaution on the part of the French government, would have been diſloyal, and would have appeared fooliſh.

What is this antient law of Nations, which Miniſter Pickering adduces to the ſupport and juſtification

fication of that article ? The law of Nations has never exiſted but in opinion, and has always changed like it. Where is the code in which this antient law of Nations is to be found ? Where are the articles and principles of it to be read ? The law of ſavage Nations is to burn and ſacrifice the priſoners of war ; and would an article of the treaty with the Indians, which ſhould approve this contract be juſtifiable becauſe it was ſhewn to be conformable to this law of Nations ? It ſeems that this law of Nations, if it exiſted any where elſe but in the will of the ſtrongeſt party, ſhould come nearer to juſtice, in proportion as ſocieties improve in knowledge and civilization. But it is only in ſuperior force that it exiſts, it is at leaſt the will of the ſtrongeſt party that explains and modifies it to its advantage ; and thus it is that England views it, and wiſhes to continue to view it in the right of taking an enemy's property in neutral veſſels.

The United States unable to cope with England, could not pretend to have this power renounced to this manner of interpreting the law of Nations ; no more than they could hinder her from taking their veſſels and preſſing their ſeamen : to ſuffer what it does not approve but cannot prevent, is the common lot of weakneſs. But when by treaty, the United States admit this interpretation, contrary to what they conſtantly have done ſince they became a politic body ; when they ap-

prove, by an expreſs contract, the wrongs they complained of ſix months before, as an abuſe of ſtrenght ; it can no longer be attributed to weakneſs only : weakneſs ſuffers, but does not act ; when it does act, it becomes a will, and when the reſult is to deliver to new allies, the property of antient friends ; is not this will a poſitive abandonment of the intereſt of antient friends ? Is it to be wondered that this is ſtiled a manifeſt violation of the treaty ? In vain will a government thus culpable, ſeek its juſtification in antient and modern writers. In vain will it undertake to find it in the labyrinths of diplomatic chicanery. The deciſion of the queſtion will be found in the heart of all impartial upright men. Here will dwell irrevocably the ſentiment of right and wrong ; and it is to this tribunal I appeal.

Mr. Pickering, in his quotation from Vattel and other treaties of foreign Nations, ſeeks an anſwer to the complaints made by the french Miniſter, upon that article of the treaty which renders materials neceſſary to the repairing and conſtruction of veſſels, contraband objects. There is no general law exiſting which determines in particular, what are or are not contraband articles in time of war. Stipulations in this reſpect have varied in different treaties ; and the contracting parties have the right as well as cuſtom of defining them. From which he concludes that France is not founded on any complaint.

But when France, the antient ally of America, is at war with England, and evidently ſtands in need of naval ſtores to repair and increaſe her marine, does not the government of the United States, in acknowledging, by a treaty, England's right to ſeize, in her ſhips, naval ſtores bound to France, pronounce a voluntary and formal oppoſition to the increaſe and repairs of the marine of this laſt power, the ally of America. And when its exiſting treaty with France does not comprehend naval ſtores, among its contraband articles, ſo that they may be conducted to England without any danger of being taken, does not this ſhew a plain preference, evidently given to England? And, even forgetting for a moment this alliance with France, is it not a violation of the neutrality?

Mr. Pickering ſees, in the clauſe by which England obligates herſelf to pay to the American merchants, the price of their contraband articles, taken on board their veſſels, an encouragement for them, to attempt to carry them to France, — and, for my part, I ſee in this way of interpreting it, the moſt immoral and pernicious doctrine, which may appear aſtoniſhing to come from the pen of a Miniſter of State; for, it is poſitively authorizing the American merchants to diſobey the laws of their own country: which is the greateſt public offence in a well regulated ſtate and eſpecially in a free ſtate; beſides, there is nothing in all this reaſoning, but the immorality of principle, and

violation of the treaty with France, reſulting wholly from the convention which delivers its intereſt to her enemy.

I proceed to the article, in which Miniſter Pickering, anſwers that of the note, where the French Miniſter, ſays that the negotiation of the United States has been *enveloped, from its origin in the ſhadow of myſtery, and covered with the veil of diſſimulation.*

Miniſter Pickering reproaches the French Miniſter, with having ſaid in his note, that the Preſident in his meſſage of the 16th. April 1794, had declared that Mr. Jay *was ſent to London only to obtain redreſs of wrongs*; and reeſtabliſhing the text of the meſſage, Mr. Pickering ſays that the Preſident's own words are that *Mr. Jay had inſtructions to vindicate the rights of the United States with firmneſs, and cultivate peace with ſincerity.* If this literal quotation of the text of the meſſage, is the anſwer that Miniſter Pickering deems ſufficient to deſtroy the opinion of the French Miniſter; that the negociation of the treaty, has been from its origin *inveloped in miſtery* : few people, I believe, will think as he does; and there is no one who will ſee in the text, any intimation even an indirect one, of a project of amity and commerce with England. But I will dwell no longer upon this article; and I will grant that the Senate alone had a right to complain of this reticence, and that no one has that of interfering in the relati-

ons of the chief of the executive, with the Legiſlature.

As to Miniſter Pickering's anſwer to the reproach of diſſimulation with France which the French Miniſter caſts on the American government, here I may dwell a little longer with propriety.

Miniſter Pickering begins by declaring that America is independent; that ſhe has been acknowledged as ſuch by France; and further quotes (for his anſwer abounds with quotations) the declaration made by Marquis Noailles at the court of London in the name of France, of which he was then ambaſſador; where he ſays the United States are independent, and that *the King has not exacted of them any excluſive advantage in favour of the French Nation; and that they have reſerved the liberty of treating with every nations whatever upon the ſame footing of equality and reciprocity.* And Miniſter Pickering concludes the alliance of the United States with France, not having rendered them dependent on this power, they have a right to treat with England without her permiſſion.

Miniſter Pickering without any neceſſity for it, has taken up ſeveral lines, to ſupport a truth which no one has any right or deſire to conteſt. But excluſive of the dependence of one nation on the will of another, which may be more properly termed ſubmiſſion or ſervitude and which can never be the caſe with a free nation; does there not exiſt between nations a dependence, or duty which

the different ſituations they are in with reſpect to one another, render ſtronger and more extenſive. Is is not by virtue of this duty of proceedings that allied nations, generally communicate to one another the negociations of a certain importance, which they undertake with other powers. And does not this duty become a little more preciſe, when the negotiation may, by its nature, alarm the allied nation, for its own intereſt. This duty generally obſerved by allied powers, might be called the law of nations, rather than the right of taking enemy's property on board neutral veſſels; it is founded upon the intereſts as well as upon the reciprocal advantage between allied nations, and it is upon this ground that the French Nation can reproach the United States with diſſimulation, in their negociation with England then at war with her, and it ſeems difficult that this reproach could appear exagerated. Mr. Pickering ſays this communication was made to France ſo far as candour and friendſhip required it, in informing her officially that Mr. Jay had inſtructions not to weaken the previous *engagements*. But if the advantages that France had by her treaty with America are done away by the treaty with England; if America conſents to terms diſadvantageous, and ruinous to France; if, in fact, England becomes by this treaty the moſt favoured by America; which ſhe undoubtedly is by the liberty granted her as a right to ſeize french property in American bot-

toms, and that which increaſes the liſt of contraband articles amongſt thoſe that are moſt eſſential to France; where is all this candor and ſincerity? Mr. Jay, ſays Miniſter Pickering, has been faithful to his inſtructions, in inſerting in 25th. article of the laſt treaty the implicit ſtipulation, that nothing contained in this treaty ſhall be conſtrued or operate contrary to former and exiſting treaties with other ſovereign States. But if notwithſtanding that this treaty evidently operates againſt the intereſt of France, then this ſtipulation is nothing but a deception.

Let us lay aſide this chicanery of diplomatic lawyers and examine the queſtion with ſimplicity and bonne-foi. When a nation declares to its ally, that in the negotiation it undertakes with another power, it will not depart from the engagements formerly made with her; can or ought any one to interpret this declaration in any other light than as an aſſurance that the ſituation of its ally, after the new negotiation, ſhall remain the ſame as before it was brought in queſtion; that it ſhould looſe none of its former advantages, that it ſhould ſuffer nothing in its intereſt by this new negotiatiou? Can candour take this declaration in any other point of view? For if the government which makes this declaration, had nothing elſe in view, but the care not to alter the letter of any of the articles contained in the treaties previouſly made with its friend, without noticing

any conſequences unfavorable to this friend which might reſult from this mechanical preſervation of the words contained in the preceeding treaties: it could not make this declaration, as the perfomance of a duty of amity and ſincerity, ſince, it reſerves to itſelf, in idea, the privilege of injuring its friend. This declaration thus underſtood, would evidence, in the ally that ſhould make it, a diſpoſition of a bad intention, of malevolence, perhaps of the moſt profound fineſſe, but ſurely not of candour. It is not then the kind of declaration that France could ſuppoſe the United States of making when they announced that they ſent to England to vindicate their offended rights, and to endeavour, in obtaining redreſs, to avoid a war: however this treaty is evidently injurious to the intereſts of France. The renunciation made by America to all nation at war with England, of carrying proviſions, naval ſtores, timber, deprives her of eſſential reſources, as the right granted to England of taking ennemy's property under American colours delivers up her commerce to the ennemy; the admiſſion of Engliſh veſſels of war and their prizes into American ports, likens England to France and conſequently encreaſes the dangers of war to the latter, which alone by the treaty of 1778 ſhould have the advantage of this admiſſion. All theſe facts, all theſe reſults are certain; they cannot be denied by any perſon whatever. Are theſe the conſequences which ought to follow from the declaration

made

made to France by the American Government, under the colours of friendſhip and ſincerity ? And do not theſe reſults become more ruinous and offenſive to France, when the treaty producing them is made, at the moment when France at war with England, attacked by many other powers, has the greateſt occaſion of the reſources, it deprives her of ? Is not the treaty thus conceived and made at this period a connivance pronounced at the deſire loudly expreſſed by England to affamiſh France, to ruin her commerce, her marine, and do her every poſſible injury ? This is not the declamation of an attorney, an interpretation of words or ſentences artfuly made, a conſequence ingeniouſly drawn from a paſſage in ſome writer ; it is a plain, ſimple poſitive declaration of facts : which I ſubmit to the judgment of every wiſe impartial mind, whatever country it belongs to.

I will not follow Miniſter Pickering in his anſwer to the complaints made by the French Miniſter, on the ſubject of proclamations, of orders given to cuſtom-houſe officers, of the obſtacles of every kind put on the admiſſion of French prizes into American ports, on deciſions contrary to treaties that have taken place, the favour ſhewn to the armaments of Britiſh privateers &c, this would be a pleading without end as well as without utility. I believe we ſhall find in the anſwers of Miniſter Pickering, and even in the manner in which he renders account of different facts, which

have given ground to theſe complaints, a proof that they are not without foundation: theſe facts, beſides, are nothing but the conſequence of principles by which the government of the United States has made its treaty with England, of the preference it has choſen to give her to the detriment of France. Thus could any of theſe facts preſented by the Miniſter of France fail of exactitude, or could they be ſuſceptible of an interpretation different from that he gives them, the queſtion would not change its nature. Is France put by the United States and by their treaty with England, into a ſituation more unfavorable than it was before the treaty: the queſtion reſts wholly there.

Miniſter Pickering ſeems ſurpriſed that France ſhould include in the number of her grievances againſt the Engliſh treaty, the injuries that her allies might ſuffer from it. It is perhaps very natural that the Secretary of the government of the United States ſhews ſuch ſurpriſe, and that he is ignorant why all powers have always ranked the defence of the intereſt of their allies, among their firſt duties. With a little more knowledge of the world and of affairs, Mr. Pickering would ſee even, that fidelity to allies, the natural conſequence of loyalty, is ſtill the reſult of a well calculated intereſt.

To the reproaches brought by the French Miniſter againſt the government of the United States for having heſitated to receive an Envoy from the

proſcribed French Princes, Miniſter Pickering could perhaps anſwer in maintaining the dignity of his government, that a ſtate is accountable to its allies only for actions and not for thoughts unaccompanied with any action, but he would not have in this plain, worthy anſwer, an occaſion to attack France in the opinion of the American People, and this is a taſk very dear to him. It could hardly be ſuppoſed that he had ſought the means in the acknowledgement made by France in 1778 of the independence of the United States ; it is there however that he has found it.

Hitherto party-writers eſtabliſhing as a principle that national gratitude is a chimera, that America was under no obligations to France for the ſuccours recieved from her, becauſe the latter had nothing in view but her own intereſt, hold out the idea at once that, if any ſpark of gratitude for the powerful ſuccours afforded by France, which it is difficult abſolutely to deny, ſhould be felt by the Americans, it is to the memory of the late King, that they ought to retain it ; becauſe he was then an abſolute ſovereign in his kingdom, and not to the french Nation, which was then paſſive : they would forget, or perhaps they did not know, that public opinion then in France was more powerful than the ſovereignity of the Monarch ; that he in all his power not have dared to brave it, particularly in ſuch an important circumſtance : that finding it analogous to his own, he only followed

it. Thoſe writers ſeem to have forgotten that it is french blood and french treaſures that have been ſpent in this great and glorious cauſe, which every French heart embraced with ardor : but it was neceſſary to divide the french Nation amongſt the american people, and to fulfill ſuch a precious taſk, truth and even probability are not more reſpectable than delicacy. But now the american government by its Miniſter Pickering, attacks the King and his Miniſtry, which it had ordered its ſcribblers to reſpect heretofore.

Let us now examine the grievances they are reproached with, and the motives upon which they are founded. The King in the part he took in the american war had nothing elſe in view than to diminiſh the power and naval reſources of England : and that he never declared himſelf, till the loſs of Burgoyne's army had convinced England of the impoſſibility of reconquering her colonies. From which it reſults in good logic that France offered America, only late, ſuccours, with which America could then have diſpenſed : the proofs of which, ſays the Secretary of State, are evidently found in the obſervations made by the court of France on the memorial publiſhed by the court of Saint-James, to juſtify the war ſhe declared againſt France for her treaty of alliance and commerce with the United States. It is a taſk very diſguſting to him who writes candidly, to employ himſelf in confuting all the accuſations that he is

conſcious, could not be made with ſincerity : for if he thought them ſincere, he alſo muſt neceſſarily think him who makes them, diveſted of the ſlighteſt notions of the policy and even hiſtory of his own country.

But ſince they are written by Miniſter Pickering ; it becomes neceſſary then to get over this diſguſt, and anſwer them, and this ſhould be done as briefly as poſſible.

That the King of France, in taking a part in the american war, had it in view to diminiſh the ſtrenght of her rival England, is moſt probable ; nothing is more natural in the common order of political determinations. Actions, I ſpeak not only of nations, but of individuals, in which the conſideration of perſonal intereſt is not conulted are not common. Could the United States imagin, that if France had ſeen her intereſt oppoſed in aſſiſting them ſhe would have liſtened to them ? Did they not diſpatch to the court of France, Envoys, to try to convince her that their ſeparation from England was, her real intereſt : and to ſupport, upon this baſis their requeſt, firſt of ſuccours and then of an open alliance ; which they acknowledged themſelves to ſtand in the moſt urgent need of ? Their Envoys arrived in France in 1777. If the court of France did not conclude the treaty of independence with America, till the year 1778 ; is it not of public notoriety, that ſhe had ſupplied her long before with arms, money, and

officers. Thoſe officers come as volunteers : they were ſent by Mr. Dean then agent of the United States : but thoſe officers belonged to the army of France, to the corps diſtinguiſhed by their inſtructions : and if all of them followed the impulſe of their own ſentiments in coming to ſerve the cauſe of american liberty, few amongſt them would have come to that reſolution, if they had not been ſure on their return of finding again their ſtations and places ; finally the officers were really ſent by the Miniſter of war. Arms were alſo purchaſed of merchants by the american Agent ; purchaſed, that is to ſay, they promiſed to pay for them. But the merchants were the men under the miniſtry, and the arms were taken from the arſenals of war ; the cloathes were alſo taken from the royal magaſins : the money alſo advanced to the accout of Congreſs ; or ſome of the particular States, was taken out of the royal treaſury ; finally the frigate ceded to South Carolina ; by the name of P. of Luxemburg, was bought, equipped, armed, at the expence of the King ; as is aſcertained in the claims of the Miniſter of the marine (Mr. le Marſhall de Caſtries) on the ſubject of the debt reſulting from it. My memory does not furniſh me with the reccolection of repeated inſtances, in which France without ſhowing herſelf openly, has powerfully aſſiſted the american cauſe. But I can call to memory very faithfully all thoſe I have mentioned.

Mr. Pickering reproaches the court of France, with not having determined on an alliance with the United States till after the capture of Burgoyne. But a little before that period, the opinion of a great part of the american people on the ſubject of independence, was far from being uniform. — Many, even of the friends of liberty, reſolving to obtain from England a redreſs of wrongs were diſpoſed to an accomodation, and a great number of thoſe who now join the United States, in order to reproach the antient government of France, with not having taken a part, early enough in the quarrel with America, then united with the enemies of this ſame America, burnt her towns, carried off her cattle and ſlaves, aſſiſted the ſavages in their barbarity. France ought then to have waited for à little more unanimity in opinions to declare herſelf; and in waiting for this unanimity France conſtantly and powerfully aſſiſted the american cauſe. If the views of France were only to weaken England and her policy was *machiavelian*, ſhe would have continued her ſuccours under foreign colours, and never have declared herſelf. It was eaſy to judge at that epoch that the affairs having been ſo far advanced, a reconciliation between England and her colonies could not be durable and though the troubles which would have followed would have probably agitated America for a long time without fixing her fate, England however would have been driven into expences, conti-

nnual armaments, and a long inteſtine war, which certainly would have ended ſooner or latter in the total loſs of her colonies, conſequently in weaking her forces, to be then the view of France. The King, by this conduct, might have avoided the danger repreſented to him in his council, (a memorable circumſtance) of awakening too much in the french people, the ſpirit of liberty, by openingly taking a part for the colonies at war with their Sovereign ; but the views of the King and his council, were like thoſe of the french nation, candidly to ſerve the american cauſe, which evidently appeared to them juſt, and if to declare herſelf, ſhe had waited for the moment when it could be done with more efficacy, nothing but malevolence can reproach her for it.

After this ſimple narration of facts it may appear altogether uſeleſs to combat the proofs, Mr. Pickering thinks to find, of his aſſertion in the obſervations publiſhed by the court of France, of which I have already ſpoken. Moſt of the manifeſtoes publiſhed by the powers, are rather a mere declamation than a faithfull expoſition of facts and motives. No one of the powers at war is willing to acknowledge itſelf the agreſſor, and argumentations without end are uſed by them all to accuſe the other of the firſt injury. Nobody confides in theſe political argumentations, and in the idea I have formed of what the policy of a great nation ought to be, I am far from approving this

ſyſtem,

ſyſtem, but it is cuſtomary, and conſequently I ought in the preſent caſe, to reaſon according to it; and thoſe who would reaſon juſtly, will take no other baſis. Could the court of France, confeſs to the whole world that it had excited and ſerved the american colonies in their deſire to ſhake off the yoke of England? Could it give to its treaty, with the colonies, to its reſolution to ſupport their independence of all its forces, any other motive, than that of attacks made on its commerce by England, and its reſolution, to ſeek, in conſequence, both for its own advantage and the general ſafety of Europe, to diminiſh the ſtrength of this power, which was become the tyrant of the ſeas! It was already very much for the opinions of theſe times were for the king of an abſolute monarchy to declare himſelf for the cauſe of liberty. His declaration of the above intention of ſupporting the inſurrection of the ſubjects againſt their ſovereign, would have had little favour in all the courts of Europe, and would have ſhewn the cabinet of Verſailles in very dark colours. It was neceſſary then for him alſo in reaſoning in favour of his treaty with this new people, whoſe independence he acknowledged, to ſay that when he was forming a connection, this people was really independent, and all the ſtrenght of England could not poſſibly alter this independence. Could the King of France openly acknowledge the rights of nations, to give themſelves ſuch form of government as they

prefered ? But this piece, being written in the uſual political ſtyle, as is to be allowed, let us queſtion the facts. Did France, or did ſhe not aſſiſt America, even before the declaration of independence ? And if this independence was real, inconteſtable, unalterable, why did the United States ſo earneſtly ſolicit her aſſiſtance ? Have the ſuccours been efficacious, or have they not ; have they ſhortened their quarrel, dangers, misfortunes ? (for I do not pretend to ſay that without them America would not finally have triumphed), it is for all America to pronounce, and in this reſpect I do not except any judgment but that of thoſe whoſe party ſpirit has miſled the opinion, or blotted out the remembrance.

Let not, if it ſeems more convenient, theſe remembrances be looked upon as motives of gratitude, very-well : but ſhall I be found too exacting, if I aſk that, at leaſt, thoſe who wiſh to exempt themſelves from gratitude do not alter the facts, and try to ſhow loyalty and benevolence in the light, of ill-will and perfidy. It ſeems to me this ſhort explanation anſwers ſufficiently to all the pages of quotations in the memorial of the court of France, produced by the Secretary of State Pickering. It will not perhaps be improper to oppoſe to the ſentiment of this Miniſter that of his countryman Dr. Ramſay author of the hiſtory of the american revolution, written from original pieces, depoſited in the archives of Congreſs ; which hiſtory is conſidered as the moſt impartial,

" While Congreſs vigorouſly oppoſed Great-Bri-
" tain from their own reſources, they did not ne-
" glect the important buſineſs of negotiation. The
" friendſhip of foreign powers, particularly of the
" antient and powerful monarchy of France, was,
" from the declaration of independence, earneſtly
" deſired by the new-formed States of America.
" Thoſe who write the general hiſtory of Ameri-
" can affairs, will enter into a detail of the cir-
" cumſtances which, for ſome time, delayed the
" ratification of a treaty that was early propoſed
" between the Congreſs and his moſt chriſtian ma-
" jeſty. In this partial view of the revolution ſuf-
" fice it to ſay, that the commiſſioners of the Uni-
" ted States could not have addreſſed themſelves
" to the court of France in more favourable cir-
" cumſtances. The throne was filled by a prince
" in the flower of his age, animated with a deſire
" of rendering his reign illuſtrious. The means
" employed for this purpoſe by his moſt chriſtian
" majeſty were virtue, juſtice and firmneſs, temp-
" ered with moderation. The Count de Vergen-
" nes the faithful ſervant of this monarch, had grown
" old in political knowledge, and was well ſatis-
" fied that conqueſts are neither the ſhorteſt nor
" the ſureſt way to true greatneſs.—That if mon-
" archs deſired to aggrandize their reigns, or to
" render themſelves the arbiters of ſurrounding na-
" tions, they muſt exerciſe moderation, and ſhew
" themſelves the patrons of the weak and the op-

" preſſed, without taking any advantage of their
" humble ſituation.

" Under the influence of theſe principles, on the
" 6th of February 1778, his moſt chriſtian majeſty
" Louis the Sixteenth entered into treaties of ami-
" ty and commerce and of alliance with the Ame-
" rican commiſſioners at Paris, on the footing of
" the moſt perfect equality and reciprocity. By the
" latter of theſe that illuſtrious monarch became the
" guarantee of the ſovereignty and independence of
" the thirteen United States of North-America.
" Such a powerful Ally, added to the natural force
" of America, alarmed the fears of Great-Britain
" and induced her to make an effort in the way
" of negociation to recover her late colonies. "

To this quotation from the works of an individual might be added that of all the other public acts, both of Congreſs and the ſeveral States at that period, and remind Mr. Pickering of the public opinion then prevailing, he would probably be convinced, that the one he now profeſſes, is of a new invention. But of what weight is the opinion of Mr. Pickering? And I believe there are few other citizens in the United States who ſtand in need of thoſe quotations.

In addition to the reproaches caſt upon the court of France, for its intention in its alliance with the United States and for its delay in declaring itſelf in their favour, Miniſter Pickering accuſes it of two other acts of perfidy. *It wanted to hinder England*

from treating with the United States about peace as with an independent nation and upon an equal footing, and was not willing that the Spaniards ſhould cede the property of the Weſtern territory and the navigation of the Miſſiſſipi.

None of theſe aſſertions are ſupported by any proof or documents which can fix the confidence of men not diſpoſed to believe without a motive ; theſe are accuſations and invectives and nothing more. It will appear a little ſurpriſing that the Secretary of State of a great nation ſhould dare to argue without more authority in a political piece intended to be circulated. But this logical defect is eaſily explained : 1ſt. By the ill-will intended to be excited and ſpread in America againſt France, antient preſent and againſt France future too ; and 2dly, By the intereſt then connected with the precedent to hold up Mr. Jay as the moſt politic, ſkilful and firm negotiator, as a man above all others, even to the expence of the memory of Dr. Franklin, who, according to this part of Mr. Pickering's letter appears to have been nothing but a mannikin in this grand negotiation ; whilſt in Europe we have always given him the principal ſpring. If I ſaw any appearance of proof to ſupport theſe accuſations, I ſhould hunt for the truth of it, but there are none elſe but the opinion of Mr. Jay , Mr. Pickering being undoubtedly his faithful oagan. And as it is ſaid that Governor Jay, ſees the french revolution in the Apocalypſe,

we can be excuſed for fearing to follow the wanderings of his imagination.

Finally, the laſt proof adduced by Miniſter Pickering of the perfidy of France, he finds it in the inſtructions given to Mr. Genet by the executive Council in the time of Robeſpierre, and as the executive Council ſays there : *the machiavelian principles influenced the operation of the war for independence, in the antient government of France, the ſame duplicity reigned over the negociations for peace*; Mr. Pickering wants to ſhew in it an inconteſtable proof of the diſloyalty of the antient government. A man muſt have formed the moſt invincible reſolutions to be moderate, to contain his indignation in mentioning ſuch a paragraph. Where is the country even among the Savages where the aſſertions of an enemy become proofs againſt the accuſed ? If ſuch a country could have exiſted, it was France in all the horrors and crimes of the revolutionary tribunal of Robeſpierre, Collot d'Herbois &c. But could it be believed that this infamous ſyſtem would be profeſſed in the cabinet of the ſecretary of State of the United States ? The executive Council was the head of the party which had overthrown the laſt conſtitution, dethroned and condemned the King, could he not ſeek in the wrongs laid to the charge of the antient government plauſible motives for his conduct ? Was it not for his intereſt to try to ſink him in the eſtimation of the whole world and particularly of that nation which had profeſſed moſt

attachment to this prince? And could Mr. Pickering expect that this executive had morality enough not to avail themselves of any inventions that would serve their interest? It is shameful to have to touch upon such matter and we must abandon it as quick as possible. I would, however, have it remarked that the executive Council whose testimony is now credited by Mr. Pickering, who has caused part of the instructions necessary to the present malevolence to be printed had given other secret ones to Mr. Genet who cannot have acted only by his own impression, in all points of his conduct generally disapproved in America.

All these facts being thus exposed Mr. Pickering asks himself what from these intentions and conduct of France could be able to produce this attachment of the Americans to the French which he acknowledges with reluctance, and he finds the reason of it in the victories which the armies gained together over the common enemy and in some particular affections which some Americans bore to some Frenchmen, which affection the american nation, consented afterwards to extend upon the french nation at large, without, informing itself of the motives which had induced that nation to espouse the american cause. All his generosity and justice cannot furnish him with any other motives for it. It is for the Americans who are good, just and of faithful memory to approve or disapprove this explanation, which Minister Pickering makes of their

ſentiments: they only are able to pronounce upon this matter.

I ſhall conclude this article with a quotation of a part of a piece upon national gratitude which I read ſome weeks ago in a New-York gazette which ſtruck me:

" The ſecond principle, ſays the author, on which " reſts the new doctrine, by which it is endeav- " oured to convince the Americans that no ſuch " thing ought to exiſt as national gratitude, and " that in rendering to each other mutual ſervices " nations have in view no other object than their " own intereſt, and of conſequence ſeek to be of " ſervice to themſelves alone, and whence it is con- " cluded that the intereſt of the nation aſſiſted " being as nothing in the intention of the aſſiſt- " ing nation, gratitude has no baſis and would be " equivalent to folly. This inquiry into the moti- " ves of ſervices really rendered is not of new in- " vention. In every period of time men have been " found availing themſelves of this pretext to for- " get the ſervices they have received, or enjoy them " without recollection of their authors. In every " period finally it appears as if the general opinion " was more inclined to favour this latter claſs of " obliged perſons. But let us go further.

" Several Moraliſts have advanced that ſelf-in- " tereſt is the principle of all the actions, even of " all the ſentiments of Mankind: of all, even of " paternal tenderneſs, of filial piety, of conjugal affection

" affection : that the imperious neceſſity which eve-
" ry man finds in his own boſom of acting in
" given circumſtances, in this or that particular man-
" ner, determines imperiouſly all their actions, and
" that conſequently in acting with what is called
" the extreme of generoſity, they do no more than
" give way to their ſentiments, and of courſe ſecu-
" re their intereſts. Allowing this propoſition, me-
" taphyſical as it is, to be however true, where is
" the father, or the husband who, owing the ſal-
" vation of his child or wife to the bold exer-
" tions of a perſon who had ſaved them from fire
" or aſſaſſination, would believe himſelf exempted
" from being grateful becauſe this perſon in thus
" expoſing herſelf had but obeyed the feelings of
" his heart. I will go further. A man of ſmall
" property is attacked in the poſſeſſion of his little
" fortune by a man of opulence : his cauſe is evi-
" dently juſt, but he is deſtitute of the means ne-
" ceſſary to ſuſtain a long and expenſive law-ſuit
" and is on the point of falling a ſacrifice to the
" oppreſſion and avidity of his opponent : a third
" perſon intercomes who aſſiſting him with his coun-
" ſels and his purſe affords him the means of de-
" fending his right, and of gaining his cauſe. Will
" he enquire whether the man to whoſe aſſiſtance
" he is indebted for the maintennace of his for-
" tune was or was not the inveterate enemy of his
" aggreſſor : and if by the courſe of ſuch an inquiry
" he ſhould diſcover a motive to forget the bene-

" fit, would not the opinion of every man of pro-
" bity include his condemnation ?

" But to give an example calculated to be ſtill
" better felt in the country we inhabit. The im-
" portant ſervices rendered to America by George
" Waſhington are known to every one. The cou-
" rage, the wiſdom, the perſeverance with which
" he combatted and ſurmounted obſtacles of eve-
" ry kind during the war of independence are un-
" known to no one, his devotedneſs to whatever
" he has conſidered as the intereſt of his country
" cannot be called in queſtion even by thoſe who
" believe him ſuſceptible of error, and the conſe-
" quence of the general opinion has been the conſ-
" tant expreſſion of the public gratitude. If in the
" preſent day that a number of his ſervices are al-
" ready old, his detractors, if he has any, prying
" into the principle of his actions would not allow
" any other than ambition and the love of glory
" and conſequently ſelf-intereſt and endeavour thus
" to make America retract the gratitude ſhe pays
" him, would not their endeavours be followed by
" the cenſure of the public and would not even the
" profeſſors of the doctrine I am combatting cry
" out blaſphemy. And yet the whole ſubject in
" agitation here is that of national gratitude. "

(Daily Advertiſer, 22d. November 1796.)

The quoting of this piece, will perhaps, appear to ſome of my Readers, foreign to the diſcuſſion of

Mr. Pickering's letter. As for me, the opinion I have had that all perſons would not think ſo, has made me paſs over the inconvenience of its length.

If any chief of the French nation, or any Miniſter have expreſſed a deſire that America ſhould retain a ſenſe of gratitude to that nation, I blame them for it. Where even it is evident that gratitude is juſtly due, there is not much more delicacy in demanding, than in conteſting it.

I will alſo grant, with Miniſter Pickering, that America, in the beginning of this war, evidently appeared well affected towards France, by reimbourſing her for the loans ſhe received from this power, before the time they were ſtrictly due; in carrying ſupplies of arms and money to St-Domingo, in relieving a great number of diſtreſſed inhabitants, that eſcaped from the diſaſters of that iſland. I will add further, that the ſubſcriptions for that purpoſe were abundant and laſting; that the humanity and generoſity of the Americans to the French ſufferers, were manifeſted by them from one end of the Continent to the other.

I am very far from a diſpoſition not to acknowledge kind proceedings, or to aſſign a bad motive for them. But why is this friendſhip, which ſtill exiſts towards France in allmoſt all the Americans, entirely changed in their goveenement? Why favorable to France in that time, when the crimes of her rulers had been able to ſerve as a pretext for departing from her, is it become contrary to her, ſince the

principles of moderation, juſtice, order are recalled, and a regular and wiſe conſtitution ſecures their duration? Why at the very time that England was oppreſſing America with a deſtructive and outrageous treatment, did the government of the United-States become her accomplice, in the means of deſtruction ſhe was plottering for France, which always ſhewed herſelf the Friend of America, in its deſign of affamiſhing her and ruining her commerce? And ſince, unfortunately, in inveſtigating the cauſes, it is neceſſary to renounce morality and fidelity to former engagements, what calculations of political intereſt can ſtill have guided the government of the United-States? They cannot certainly be deep ones; for whatever fate the preſent conteſt may have, its iſſue, to all appearence, cannot be advantageous to the proſperity, tranquillity and intereſt of the American people.

I know that it is generally thought, throughout America, that the treaty made with England by Mr. Jay, differs widely from the inſtructions given to this negotiator by the Preſident of the United-States; that he, in his national honor and juſtice, heſitated a long time before he preſented this political piece to the Senate; and that his wiſdom did not admit the accepting of it, only through the fear of involving America in a war with England, which was then repreſented to him as inevitable. I know that many of the moſt zealous defenders of the treaty, have ſaid that, had they been in the place of Mr. Jay,

they never ſhould have conſented to ſign it. I know all that can be ſaid concerning the weakneſs of the United-States, of the unhappy neceſſity they are under, of deviating ſometimes in their political conduct, from the dignity and firmneſs which they could wiſh to preſerve. But theſe particularities are nothing to the preſent ſtate of things. The treaty with England ſtill exiſts in all its clauſes. Can it appear ſurpriſing that France ſhould reſent thoſe proceedings, and would ſhe not be a ſubject of univerſal deriſion, if ſhe did not make it known.

If this adherence of America to the deſire that England had at the time of the treaty, to injure France was not, as ſome ſuppoſe, ſolely the effect of her weakneſs, and if it was on the contrary, the reſult of a calculation (rightly underſtood or not), of her intereſts; America certainly had a righr to do ſo, ſince ſhe is independent; but ſhe would then incur the conſequences of this calculation; as in the firſt ſuppoſition ſhe muſt incur the conſequences of her weakneſs: for in both caſes, the facts are the ſame, injurious to the intereſts of France, contrary to the intentions of the preceding treaties; and France alſo is an independent State.

Let us follow her conduct in theſe circumſtances.

Whilſt no new treaty took place between the United-States and England, France muſt ſuppoſe that the taking of American veſſels by the Engliſh, was an abuſe of ſtrength, which the United-States had no way to ſtop but by an attempt of ſome claims

made with all the prudence neceſſary to their ſituation, though ſhe really ſuffered in her intereſts, and by the loſs of her propriety taken under American colours, by the loſs of her ally,s propriety, and by the enemies enriſhing themſelves by theſe two cauſes, ſhe ought to have left to the claims of her ally, all chances to obtain a redreſs of the wrongs ſhe complained of, without thinking it poſſible to caſt any reproach upon her.

But when this redreſs of wrongs, that America complained of, is obtained to the detriment of France and when America by her conſent, ſanctions this abuſe of ſtrength ; France could not ſee only in this act a coldneſs of alliance, but ſhe muſt alſo have ſeen a poſitive abandonment of her intereſt.

In theſe circumſtances what does ſhe ſay to America ? Prevent our property which we thought would find a ſure protection under your colours from being violated by your new friends, or we ſhall not reſpect theirs covered under your colours which we have been pleaſed for ſo long time at confounding with ours. We are ſorry to be reduced to this neceſſity, but we are conſtrained to do it by yourſeves. By your new treaty with our enemy you have ruined our advantages ; you have ſtill renounced your own, to deliver up our property. Whether it be your determinate will, or weakneſs, you treat us, in fact, as enemies. We do not feel ſo ſtrong a reſentment on that account as we ſhould if your will was unanimous and forces powerful.

But put ourſelves out of the queſtion, for a moment, and ſuppoſe we requeſt your advice in a ſimilar circumſtance in which you ſhould be intereſted; could you adviſe us to remain paſſive victims of engliſh influence on the deciſions of a government that ſhould act againſt our intereſt and the real intention of our treaty ?

Such is the ſubſtance of Mr. Adet's notes or rather of the decree of the Executive Directory which is the motive of it.

Was France diſpoſed perſonally to exerciſe repriſail againſt America for the injury received from her, ſhe is really in a ſituation which gives her that right, in all juſtice: but it is againſt England herſelf that ſhe means to continue the war. In taking engliſh property in american veſſels, in the ſame manner as her own are taken, ſhe, at firſt, returns England ſuch damage as ſhe receives; ſhe does ſtill more, for three quarters of the commerce of american ports belonging to England or being eſtabliſhed upon engliſh funds, the american veſſels, are in fact, engliſh property; and England herſelf ſuffers three quarters of this evil. But a deſire ſo cruel and unhappily ſo neceſſary to do effectual injuries to the enemy, could not be a reaſon for excuſing the conduct of France and her deviation from her treaty with America, if America had not in reality firſt violated the treaty. If any ſupreme court could take cognizance of the violation of the treaty, between America and France, the government

of the United States might find its counſellors, but juries without doubt, would give their opinion againſt it. And in this reſpect, we may with ſafety appeal to the conſciences of a great number of thoſe who in Congreſs, Town-meetings &c, have given their voice for the treaty, and they would ſay that in the fatal ſituation, to which the negotiator Jay had reduced the affairs, they have voted to avoid a war; that after the ratification of the treaty they ſtill voted to ſupport the government which they thought dangerous to abandon; but that they had always foreſeen the pernicious conſequences of this treaty and ackowledged that England had no object in it, more at heart than to ſow the ſeeds of diſcontent between France and the United States and break off the union of the two nations.

I cannot compriſe in the conduct of France, the ſeizure that now takes place in the French colonies, of American veſſels and their cargoes, to whatever ports they may be bound, without any eſtimation and without paying, or engaging to pay. I ſhall not take upon me to juſtify ſuch a diſorder; and I do not find in any place that the government of France had, by any inſtructions given, the leaſt ground for theſe injuſt, cruel, ſavage exactions, and ſo contrary in their effect to the colonies of being ſupplied with proviſions as to the proprietors, who become the victims of the exactions.

Miniſter Pickering, in endeavouring to aſſign a reaſon for the requeſt he made to the French Miniſter

ter, of an explanation of the decree of the Directory, ſays, amongſt other arguments, that this decree declaring that *the flag of the french Republic will treat neutral veſſels, as they ſhall ſuffer the Engliſh to treat them*; the execution of theſe conditions ſo ruinous to the American commerce, is left to the will of the French privateers; who either owing to their diſtance from their country, or to particular avidity, were unacquainted, or pretended to be unacquainted with the real determination and conduct of England in this reſpect. But if an agreement was made between America and England, by which the commerce of France ſhould not be moleſted in american veſſels, the ſubſequent captures made by french veſſels, privateers or others, ſhould be ſubjected to reſtitution, as, by all the treaties of peace, the taking of territories, or properties, in diſtant countries after theſe articles ſigned, is declared nul and reſtored. This queſtion anſwers ſo well for itſelf, that it is difficult to imagine how Miniſter Pickering could judge an explanation of it neceſſary.

Miniſter Pickering, in his letter to Mr. Pinckney, and his preceeding anſwer to Mr. Adet, makes it a crime in the French Miniſter to have publiſhed his note to the Secretary of State, dated 27th. October, laſt. He has, ſays Mr. Pickering, violated the right of Nations. To appeal to the people for the conduct of its government, is an attempt to excite an inſurrection: it is provoking it. But let the unprejudiced minds, who wiſh to pronounce only from juſtice,

(for I do not pretend to perſuade party ſpirits), let unprejudiced minds I ſay, put themſelves for a moment in the ſituation of the Miniſter of a foreign nation, of an allied nation, who in the moſt intereſting circumſtances to the nation, of which he is Envoy, does not receive for ſeveral months any anſwer from the governement of the people to which he is ſent; who knows that powerful parties attempt, by all means, to miſlead the minds of the people, againſt his own nation, and to paint her as actuated by hoſtile views, and perfidious deſigns. Can he, without rendering himſelf culpable towards the nation, whoſe intereſts are intruſted to him, ſuffer the minds of the friends of his nation, to be alienated by falſe accuſations? Had the French Miniſter made public the firſt ſteps of a negociation with the government, he would then have deſerved reproach, but it was only after eight months ſilence of that government, that he made known, by publiſhing his letter, what his conduct has been, what are the views of his nation, and what have been the proceedings of the government towards him. An individual may paſs over a perſonal injury, but can a man in public ſtations, the repreſentative of an offended nation, let the injury paſs unnoticed; when he is convinced, that the damages attempted to be done his country, in the opinion of the public, would encreaſe in danger, if he ſhould remain ſilent? If his diſtance from his country, would permit him to apply to his own government before the evil, he muſt endeavour to avoid, can take place; he ſhould, and perhaps even

he ought, to take that way. But when ſeveral months together cannot furniſh him with the advice and determination of his own government; and when he has to apprehend, before that period, the ſucceſs of intrigues plotted againſt his country; if he does not acquaint the people who are the allies of his country, with the intention and views of his own country: if he does not expoſe to them his own conduct, he will be very much in the wrong. He does not reveal the ſecret of the American government, he holds up its conduct to view, makes known the ſentiments of his own nation, and by taking this ſtep for the honour of his country and the preſervation of his own character, he finds a way to obtain from that government an anſwer he had ſo long ſought in vain.

It is an inconteſtable truht that foreign Miniſters are ſent into America as into all other States, to treat with the government to which they ought to addreſs themſelves; but when the government refuſes to treat with foreign Miniſters, and it is, however, eſſential to the intereſt of the State from which they are ſent to obtain an anſwer, what other way have they left but to appeal to the opinion of the public for their conduct! Miniſter Pickering in his anſwer to this note, as alſo in his letter to Mr. Pinkney aſſigns, as a reaſon for his ſilence the intimations ſo injurious to the government of the United States contained in one of the French Miniſter's letters. Had not Miniſter Pickering in his anſwer, of the 1ſt. November laſt, to Mr. Adet

picked out particular paſſages to give more malig ity to ſome of the ſentences contained in this letter, and had he cited it in full as it is now in the document, no one would have found in it any intimations injurious to the United States, or any improper expreſſions. If there was any thing of that kind, I would not defend it; for I am one of thoſe who think that public as well as private affairs ought to be treated with calmneſs, cold reaſoning and civility; that harſhneſs of expreſſion can add nothing to the force of reaſoning. Tho' it ſhould be true (which I cannot find), that the diſcontent eaſy to be explained in a french Miniſter, was expreſſed in terms which it would have been better not to have uſed, would the impropriety of theſe expreſſions be an excuſe in the american Miniſter for not anſwering the important queſtions contained in this letter? The refuſal of an anſwer amongſt individuals is one of the greateſt offences; it is ſtill more ſerious from a Miniſtry to another; for a delay and a change in the nature of affairs and diſpoſitions of an intereſted people, is often the reſult. Miniſter Pickering ſays that he had ſcratched off a rough anſwer, and on reflection, did not think proper to ſend it. But was there not in this circumſtance, ſomething more than a rough anſwer, or complete ſilence?

Either the american Miniſter wiſhed the people of the United States to continue the friends of France or to embroil the two nations in a quarrel. In

the firſt caſe, the moſt ſimple explanation might probably have removed from the letter whatever expreſſions appeared diſpleaſing, or at leaſt produced a friendly diſcuſſion. For between perſons who ſincerely do not wiſh to quarrel, explanation takes place even tho' not friends before. If Miniſter Pickering had carried his reſentment further he might have complained to the French government of the language of its Envoy. But if he wiſhed to embroil the two nations in a quarrel ; he could not have done better to anſwer his purpoſe, though it may ſtill be hoped that he will not ſucceed.

After this motive which Miniſter Pickering aſſigns for his ſilence both in his anſwer to Mr. Adet and his letter to Mr. Pinkney, it is evident that this anſwer is owing to the publication of the french Miniſter's note which by this acknowledgement alone is juſtified.

Since I have ſpoken of this anſwer of Miniſter Pickering to the French Miniſter, I will ſay a word more, and that ſhall be upon the article in which the Secretary of State invelops himſelf in myſtery in the queſtion made by the french Miniſter, relative to the meaſures taken by the government of the United States to prevent the impreſſment of American ſailors by the Engliſh ; which myſtery is founded upon that determination's not regarding the intereſt of the United States ; and I will add, that this anſwer alone diſcovers a poſitive malevolence. For it cannot be ſuppoſed that a Secretary of State

is incapable of diſtinguiſhing the affairs of his own government from thoſe in which the intereſts of other nations are implied. The youngeſt clerk, in his office knows that the impreſſment of american ſailors by the Engliſh, increaſes the maritime force of that power beyond their natural reſources; and conſequently its ſtrenght againſt France with whom it is at war; that it is, of courſe, the right and intereſt of France to know what means can be taken to prevent this encreaſe of reſources, in favor of the enemy. Even were not France the Ally of the United States, ſhe would have that right, while the United States profeſſed themſelves neutral, and their antecedent reſolutions of friendſhip and alliances could only give ſtill more force to this right.

I might have been much more particular in tracing the different articles of Miniſter Pickering's letter to Mr. Pinkney, and I might have examined, thoſe I have related, more extenſively. But, if I am not miſtaken, the diſcuſſion leaves no doubt reſpecting the reality of the wrongs that France receives from the new treaty made between England and conſequently of her complaints againſt her ally and, of courſe, of the legality of her conduct towards her.

The malevolence of the american Government towards France has unfortunately no leſs evidence. If its intention had not manifeſted that character, and the empire of circumſtances, the known weakneſs of its means to enter into a war with England,

the laudable deſire of keeping the United States in a peace neceſſary to their proſperity had alone determined it to conclude this treaty with England, and at a time when ſhe was at war with France; might not the American government have propoſed to France a treaty, upon the ſame terms as that it had concluded with its enemy? This treaty would not have given its ally the ſame advantages ſhe enjoyed before; but this offer would have ſhewn at leaſt, that it did not wiſh to place her in a ſituation more diſadvantageous than that of her enemy. Then the American government could have ſaid, with a greater degree of probability, that the United-States, in an important circumſtance for their tranquillity made uſe of the right they had reſerved to themſelves, of treating all nations, with equal favor. But the hatred of England to France would not than have been ſatisfied; and it muſt be ſatisfied. Her vow to ſeparate France from the United States would not have been ſatisfied; and it muſt be ſatisfied. It was neceſſary to put France in ſuch a ſituation as to think herſelf offended: as in the caſe, when ſhe ſhews herſelf ſo, to ſeek every method to alienate the affection of the American people from her.

To what other intention can the haughty, rough conduct of Miniſter Pickering towards the French Miniſter be imputed; a conduct which a *Nabob* of India would wiſh not to be able to ſuffer from England? What can the indecences, the ironies heavy and clumſy, but injurious towards France, which

reign in Mr. Pickering's letter be attribued to? Is it poſſible to think that ſuch a letter as is made public covers the deſire of reconciliation, and does it not rather ſeem to be formed with an intention of ſhutting up the way to every negociation. Finally, had that letter been dictated by a Britiſh Counſil, then it would undoubtedly have been written in a better ſtyle, but could it have ſerved his views better?

May theſe appearences, palpable as they are, have no reality! He who impartially conſiders how dangerous it would be to the United-States to deliver themſelves up to England (if perſonal views have lodged it in ſome brains), cannot ſuppoſe that this project could be approved by a great number of Americans. It is, however, beyond all doubts that ſuch a project is going into effect. In politics as in the common courſe of private actions, the firſt ſtep if wrong and inconſiderate, carry pride far beyond the intentions, which at firſt determined them. Vanity loath to acknowledge a firſt error, ſtrives to defend it with ſharpneſs; irritation ariſes in both ſides; faults multiply, and the vaſt precipice into which a nation is about to be plunged is not perceived by itſelf till the force which puſhes on cannot be ſtopped.

France can have no kind of deſire of a rupture with the United States. She is their moſt antient ally, and whatever Miniſter Pickering may ſay, France has gallantly ſerved America, in the cauſe of her independence. France is a Republic and wiſhes to

continue ſuch ; ſhe ſees in the american conſtitution, the firſt conſtitution ; in the Americans, a people the moſt attached to liberty ; few ties can be ſtronger. Thoſe who charge France with a ſpirit of domination and ſo repeat the common ſaying which England makes to be ſpread to blind others upon her own ambition, may ſuppoſe in France a deſire to rule over the other European powers by which ſhe was ſurrounded. But what intereſt could France have in ruling over the United States ; their force cannot for a long time be of any uſe to her. There can be no rivalſhip between the two nations and the real intereſt of France which no ſenſe of former revenge againſt the United States can obſcure, muſt make her wiſh their proſperity, encreaſe their independence, and in this reſpect, they are the ſame with thoſe of the American people themſelves.

But what diſpoſition, what motive can France have in remaining united to America, muſt ſhe patiently ſee that the ſame ſentiments and diſpoſitions are not entertained by the government of the United States ? Would France be a deſirable ally if ſhe ſhould ſuffer her intereſts to be abandoned to the hatred of her enemies.

It is to the wiſdom and the ſound judgment of the American people, that I ſubmit theſe obſervations. They might eaſily have been preſented with more bitterneſs, and I venture to ſay the ſubject would furniſh it fully. But it is my intention to offer only truths. I wiſh rather to ſoften than irritate the

ſharpneſs of diſpoſitions. May theſe truths be carefully weighed. The United States ought beyond all doubt, moſt preciouſly to maintain their independence and not to abandon it more in favor of France than England. They ought moſt undoubtedly, to remove from it all ſeeds of an anarchical and deſorganiſing ſpirit, which has too long a time ravaged France. But ought the government of America to ſee them, to ſhew them where they do not exiſt: ought it under pretence of deſtroying them, to ſacrifice the intereſt of a nation, with which they have contracted the moſt ancient engagement? Ought it to charge the proceedings of this nation with perfidious intentions when they are altogether amicable and juſt? Finally, does ſhe wiſh to break off the union with France, to put herſelf on a dependence upon England? I am yet far from ſuppoſing it poſſible; but if the American government was ſo blind as to think a rupture with France advantageous to the United States, (and they have certainly a right to change their alliances), an open declaration of this reſolution would at leaſt have more good faith and dignity than the repeated efforts uſed to throw all the wrongs and all the odium of this rupture upon France, and charge her with hoſtile and perfidious intentions againſt the United States, with which France deſires nothing ſo much as to perpetuate and ſtrengtn the ties.

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